

Message Text

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S/S - MR. MOFFAT

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 298094

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, KS, FR

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANS

REF: PARIS 32534

1. MINISTER DE LA GORCE, FRENCH EMBASSY, SAW PM DIRECTOR GEORGE VEST, TO CONVEY COMMENTS OF MFA SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR DE NAZELLE ON THIS SUBJECT. COMMENTS FOLLOWED VERY CLOSELY THOSE REPORTED BY EMBASSY IN REFTEL WHICH WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN ALLOWING DEPARTMENT TO RESPOND ON A TIMELY BASIS TO DE NAZELLE CONCERNS.

2. DE LA GORCE CONVEYED THREE COMMENTS:

(A) WITH REGARD TO CANCELLING THE REPROCESSING PLANT,

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FRENCH APPRECIATE THAT US APPROACH DIRECTED AT KOREA

RATHER THAN FRANCE. FRANCE DOES NOT OBJECT TO US APPROACH BUT WISHES TO BE SURE US UNDERSTANDS PROPOSED PLANT IS A PILOT NOT A COMMERCIAL PLANT.

(B) FRANCE IS CONCERNED THAT US EMPHASIS IN TERMS OF NON-PROLIFERATION RISK IS ON REPROCESSING. FRENCH FEEL OTHER PARTS OF CYCLE ARE ALSO IMPORTANT SUCH AS REACTORS AND IN PARTICULAR DID NOT WISH TO SEE EMPHASIS ON RISK OF REPROCESSING AFFECTING COMMERCIAL FUTURE OF SAINT GOBAIN.

(C) IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO THE FRENCH TO KNOW WHAT WE HAD IN MIND WITH REGARD TO SATISFYING KOREA'S FUTURE REPROCESSING NEEDS, IF THE US IS SUCCESSFUL IN CANCELLING THE PILOT PLANT. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THE US HAS IN MIND EXPANDING THE ROLE OF THE SECOND JAPANESE PLANT TO A REGIONAL, MULTINATIONAL CONCEPT, FRANCE WOULD BE INTERESTED AND WOULD WELCOME US SUPPORT FOR FRENCH INVOLVEMENT.

3. VEST RESPONDED TO 2(A) BY REAFFIRMING EMBASSY'S POINT THAT ACTING SECRETARY'S DISCUSSING WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR WAS TO KEEP FRENCH INFORMED AND THAT FORCEFUL REPRESENTATION HAD BEEN MADE TO KOREANS BOTH IN WASHINGTON AND SEOUL. VEST POINTED OUT THAT US WAS AWARE OF NATURE OF PROPOSED PILOT PLANT AND WAS SEEKING NOT ONLY CANCELLATION OF THIS PLANT BUT ALSO DISCOURAGE ANY PLANS FOR FUTURE REPROCESSING PLANTS IN KOREA.

4. ON 2(B) VEST RESPONDED THAT THE US WAS NOT IN ANY WAY SEEKING A COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE. OUR EMPHASIS ON THE RISKS OF REPROCESSING WERE SIMPLY THAT WEAPON GRADE MATERIAL WAS DIRECTLY AVAILABLE FROM SUCH FACILITIES. HOWEVER, WE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE RISK INVOLVED IN SUPPLY OF REACTORS AND THAT IS WHY WE WERE SEEKING IN OUR OWN NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS FOR COOPERATION TO CONTROL THE DISPOSITION OF US SUPPLIED OR DERIVED MATERIALS.

5. WITH REGARD TO SATISFYING KOREA'S FUTURE FUEL CYCLE NEEDS, VEST POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAD INDICATED IN A GENERAL WAY OUR WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST THE KOREANS, NO CONCRETE PROPOSAL HAD BEEN MADE. WE SAW BENEFIT,
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HOWEVER, IN ATTEMPTING TO ENCOURAGE JAPANESE INTEREST IN A MULTINATIONAL PLANT THAT COULD SERVE KOREAN NEEDS AS WELL AS OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. WE WERE THEREFORE ATTEMPTING TO BEGIN A DIALOGUE WITH THE GOJ ON THIS SUBJECT BUT BECAUSE OF THE WASTE DISPOSAL PROBLEM AND THE GENERAL JAPANESE NUCLEAR ALLERGY, IT APPARENTLY IS A VERY SENSITIVE SUBJECT FOR THE GOJ. BECAUSE OF THIS SENSITIVITY, SUCH DISCUSSIONS WILL LIKELY BE CON-

FIDENTIAL. HOWEVER, WE WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE FRENCH
INFORMED. GIVEN THE FRENCH INTEREST AND EXPERTISE IN
THE REPROCESSING AREA, IT WAS LOGICAL THAT FRANCE SHOULD
BE INVOLVED AT AN APPROPRIATE STAGE IF INITIAL US/
JAPANESE EXPLORATORY DISCUSSION LOOKS PROMISING.
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